

Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards

Land Conservation Category

2008 Instructions



The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards are supported by Virginia's Governor, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Environmental Quality, and other partner organizations. There are three categories of awards: Environmental Project, Environmental Program, and Land Conservation. Instructions for the Environmental Project and Environmental Program categories are available in a separate document. Awards for Land Conservation encourage Virginia's industries, government entities, and individuals to conserve the Commonwealth's land and to practice excellent environmental stewardship by recognizing outstanding efforts each year. Additional information about the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards can be found at www.deq.virginia.gov/info/geeaward.html.

Applications Due: **January 11, 2008, 5 p.m.** Applications should be submitted in hard copy (double-sided preferred) to Marcia M. Loschiavo, PO Box 412, Richmond VA 23218-0412 or via e-mail to mmloschiavo@comcast.net

Awards Ceremony: **April 2, 2008 at the 2008 Environment Virginia Conference in Lexington**
(Finalists will be notified several weeks prior to the ceremony.)

Purpose

The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards are intended to recognize the leaders in land conservation within the Commonwealth.

Awards

There are three levels of awards in each category based upon points awarded: gold, silver, and bronze. Applications judged to be at the gold level that receive the highest point totals in each category will be awarded the Governor's Environmental Excellence flag.

Judging

1. An independent panel of judges will be appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources representing:
 - Department of Conservation & Recreation
 - Department of Environmental Quality
 - Citizen/Environmental Groups
 - Academia
 - Public/Governmental Groups
 - Business or Industry
2. Judges reserve the right to omit an award based on the number and quality of entries.

Eligibility

1. Entries in the Land Conservation category may be submitted by (1) business and industry with operating facilities located in Virginia; (2) government entities that own or manage land in Virginia; or (3) individuals, for projects completed in Virginia.
2. Conservation easements on the protected property must have been recorded prior to submission of the award application.
3. Judges may not evaluate an application for an entity or individual with which they are associated.
4. An application that won a gold level award for land conservation is not eligible for an award unless the applicant clearly demonstrates substantial changes between the current application and the past winning application.

Publicity

Every effort is made to promote these events in order to encourage attendance and media coverage, as well as the prestige associated with the awards themselves. The awards will be presented jointly by the Governor and the Secretary of Natural Resources at the 2008 Environment Virginia Conference in Lexington in April (www.environmentva.org), which is typically attended by over six hundred participants.

Threshold Questions for Land Conservation Awards

In order to qualify for the Land Conservation category, the applicant must answer two threshold questions in the affirmative:

1. Is the land permanently protected by either a conservation easement or a donation of the land to a conservation organization?
2. If you were or are the landowner, was the land or conservation easement donated or sold at below market value?

Criteria

Applicants should address each of the following criteria:

A. Public Access	20 points
B. Water Quality Protection	20 points
C. Protection of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species or Exemplary Natural Communities	20 points
D. Land Management	20 points
E. Threat of Development/Green Infrastructure	10 points
F. Protection of Working Land	10 points

In Section 3, answer the questions related to each criterion:

Public Access

- What kind of public access is available?
- Are there educational programs or interpretive signage on the property?
- What is the involvement of your employees and the community in the management and enhancement of the protected property?

Water Quality Protection

- Are best management practices for water quality being implemented on the preserved property?
- Are lands adjacent to streams and water bodies protected and being managed as wooded buffers?
- Are wetland areas identified and protected?

Protection of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species or Exemplary Natural Communities

- Are there rare, threatened, or endangered species or exemplary natural communities on the property?
- If there are rare, threatened, or endangered species on the property, how are they protected and managed?
- Describe the requirements to protect wildlife habitat contained in the deed.

Land Management

- Is there a comprehensive land conservation program throughout the applicants' holdings?
- Will the property for which the award application is made be actively managed? If so, is there a written management plan and how does it address:

- Protective measures for indigenous plants and wildlife?
- Irrigation, fertilization, and harvesting practices based on environmental protection?
- Preservation of wooded lands adjacent to streams and water bodies?
- Identification, protection and management of wetland areas in accordance with all applicable requirements and regulations?
- How activities in protected areas consider wildlife nesting periods and plant blooming and seeding cycles?
- For companies, is training in land management provided to employees and contractors?

Threat of Development

- Do local developmental patterns threaten or affect the property?
- Is there an identifiable threat to the resource or compelling need for immediate preservation?
- Does preservation of the property conform to the locality's comprehensive plan?
- Does the locality have a green infrastructure or other smart-growth plan?

Protection of Working Lands

- Is the land currently in farm or forest use?
- How does the donation of the conservation easement or land ensure that the land can continue in farm or forest use?
- Is there a farm conservation plan or forest stewardship plan for the property?
- Are waterways on the property protected by vegetated buffers?

Application Instructions

The electronic Word form will expand if you need additional space; however, applications are limited. Address all parts of the application form. to a total of three pages with no smaller than a 10 font.

Section 3 of the application should include no more than 3 pages of text. Note: Previous award winners typically have devoted one or two paragraphs to each criterion. Questions should be directed to mmloschiavo@comcast.net.

When completing Section 3, please note:

- Please include photographs in addition to the text, highlighting the property and its resources that have been protected. The photographs are not included in the page limit.
- Make sure that your description is **organized, clear, and understandable**.
- Focus on **achieved success**, not future anticipated results.
- Please note that winning applications from prior years are available for your reference at www.vmaoutreach.com/awards.
- Please be thorough. Judges will not contact you for more clarification.
- Emphasize and identify any areas where you have **gone above and beyond regulatory requirements. You must indicate whether you undertook the project voluntarily or were forced to implement the project because of legal requirements.**